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ABSTRACT

In an effort to scrutinize the evaluative criteria used by public schools throughout the State of Washington and how these criteria resulted in the placement of certificated employees on probation, a questionnaire was sent to superintendents of 179 school districts. Fifty-one percent responded. The results of the questionnaire provide an opportunity to examine the applicability of evaluative criteria to the improvement of instruction or the improvement of the teaching/learning process. The issues addressed were: (1) the purpose of teacher evaluation; (2) the relevance of the evaluative instrument used to aid in the improvement of instruction or the improvement of teaching/learning; (3) how a tenured teacher can be dismissed for incompetence after being put on probation; (4) why first-year teachers have trouble in the current system and end up on probation; (5) why so many experienced teachers end up on probation due to the current organizational system; (6) the role principals play in the evaluative process; (7) two new approaches to evaluation; and (8) what needs to be done for evaluation to become a tool for improvement in teaching rather than an instrument used to put teachers on probation. (JD)

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TEACHER PROBATION - AN OUTDATED CONCEPT?

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ABSTRACT

Should the end result of the evaluation process in education be teacher probation? What is causing a high percentage of teachers in their first five years of teaching to be put on probation? Why are a high percentage of teachers in their eleventh to fifteenth years of teaching ending up on probation? Can discipline be removed from proficiency in other areas of teaching? How many areas must a certified employee be judged deficient in before being placed on probation? Do the evaluative criteria used in the evaluation instrument result in the improvement of instruction or the improvement of the teaching/learning process? What is the role of the principal in the evaluative/probationary process? What should the evaluative process be in education? Is teacher probation a failure of the system to provide the type of growth-oriented process needed by teachers?

These questions are examined as the responses of superintendents in Washington State school districts are analyzed. Their responses were gathered in a study conduced by an Eastern Washington University Department of Education research team.

RESEARCH METHOD

In an effort to scrutinize the evaluative criteria used by public schools throughout the state of Washington and how these criteria resulted in the placement of certificated employees on probation, the Eastern Washington University Education Department sent out a questionnaire to superintendents of 179 school districts. This questionnaire was designed to cover the three year period of 1984-1987.

Fifty-one percent of the superintendents returned the questionnaire (91/179 districts). The results of this questionnaire are the basis for this article and provide a unique opportunity to examine the applicability of evaluative criteria to the improvement of instruction or the improvement of the teaching/learning process; what the purpose of teacher evaluation is; the relevancy of the evaluative instrument used to aid in the improvement of instruction or the improvement of teaching/learning; how a tenured teacher can be dismissed for incompetence after being put on probation; why first-year teachers have trouble in the current system and end up on probation; why so many experienced teachers end up on probation due to the current organizational system; the role principals play in the evaluative process; two new approaches to evaluation, and a look at what education needs to do for evaluation becoming a tool for improvement in teaching rather than an instrument used to put teachers on probation.

Who knows, maybe probation will become an outdated concept.

FINDINGS

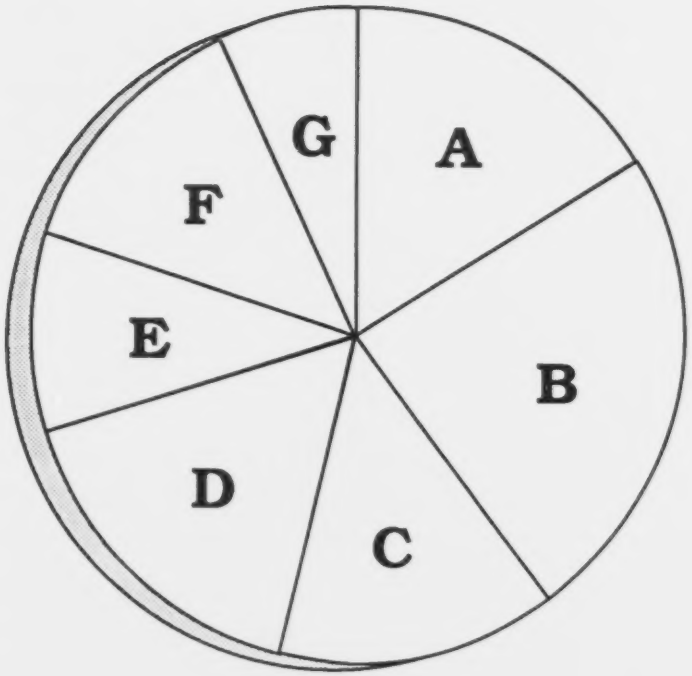
Taken by themselves, the results of this questionnaire do not seem surprising. Out of the ninety-one (91) districts that responded, one hundred and fifty-three (153) teachers were put on probation. On the surface this number seems miniscule, so why should the profession be concerned? The authors of this article contend that the placement of even one teacher on probation is a failure of the system to provide the type of evaluative instrument that seeks to help improve instruction rather than specifically look for incompetence.

Table 1 gives a breakdown of the number of years of teaching experience for those placed on probation.

TABLE 1

Washington State 1984-1987

Years in which teachers are placed on probation



A	Year 1	= 16%
B	Years 2-5	= 24%
C	Years 6-10	= 14%
D	Years 11-15	= 16%
E	Years 16-20	= 10%
F	Years 21-25	= 13%
G	Years 26-38	= 7%

It is interesting to note that the percentage of teachers placed on probation in their first year of teaching is equal to the number of teachers in their eleventh to fifteenth years of teaching. What is happening in these middle years? Are incompetencies just now being discovered or might the bureaucratic structure in place produce the factors that result in these teachers being placed on probation? This question will be looked at later in the article.

If the number of teachers in their first five (5) years of teaching is combined it is amazing to see that 40 percent (40%) of those placed on probation are in their first years of teaching. These young people have passed through vigorous screening programs, tough academic schedules, student teaching and agonizing scrutiny for the jobs they acquired. Are these young people flawed or might the evaluative instrument and organizational structure in place be at fault? This question will be examined later in the article.

If the percentage of teachers on probation during their first five years of teaching is combined with the percentage of teachers in their eleventh to fifteenth years of teaching, it is astonishing to see that over half (56%) of teachers put on probation fall into these years of teaching categories.

Table 2 gives a specific breakdown of the years of teaching experience for those teachers placed on probation.

Table 2

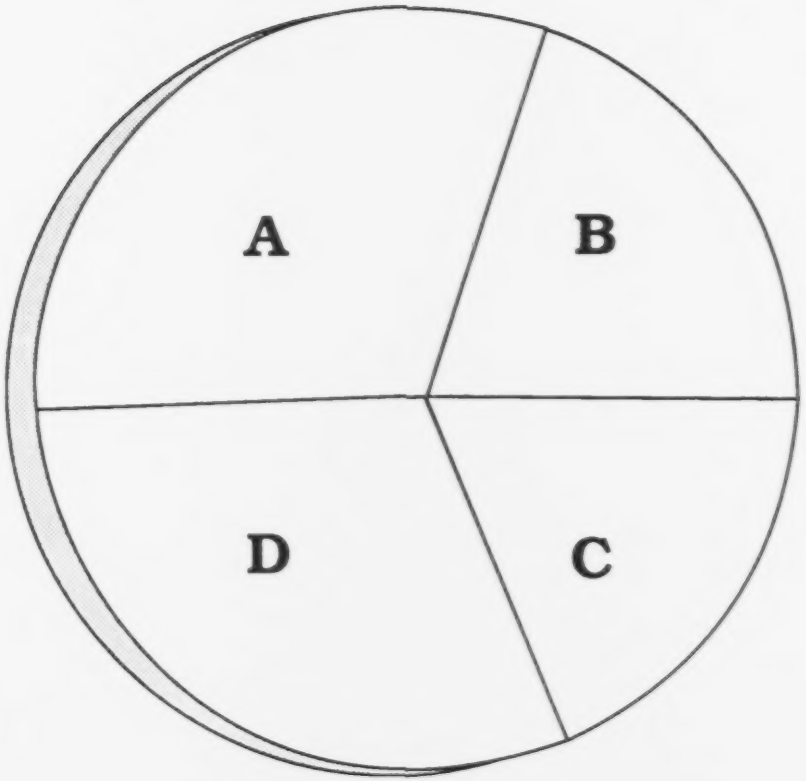
Year	Elem./Second./Not Spec.	= #	% of Total
1st	9 / 14 / 0	= 23	15.03%
2nd	4 / 7 / 0	= 11	7.18%
3rd	4 / 2 / 0	= 6	3.92%
4th	5 / 8 / 0	= 13	8.49%
5th	1 / 4 / 0	= 5	3.26%
6th	1 / 2 / 0	= 3	1.96%
7th	1 / 3 / 0	= 4	2.61%
8th	2 / 3 / 0	= 5	3.26%
9th	2 / 1 / 0	= 3	1.96%
10th	4 / 1 / 0	= 5	3.26%
11th	1 / 2 / 0	= 3	1.96%
12th	3 / 9 / 0	= 12	7.84%
13th	1 / 0 / 1	= 2	1.30%
14th	1 / 0 / 5	= 6	3.92%
16th	0 / 1 / 2	= 3	1.96%
16th+	0 / 0 / 1	= 1	0.65%
17th	1 / 0 / 1	= 2	1.30%
18th	2 / 1 / 0	= 3	1.96%
19th	0 / 2 / 1	= 3	1.96%
20th	1 / 1 / 2	= 4	2.61%
20th+	0 / 0 / 1	= 1	0.65%
20-25th	1 / 2 / -	= 3	1.96%
21st	1 / 0 / 2	= 3	1.96%
22nd	0 / 0 / 2	= 2	1.30%
23rd	0 / 0 / 2	= 2	1.30%
24th	1 / 1 / 4	= 6	3.92%
25th	3 / 0 / 3	= 6	3.92%
25th+	0 / 0 / 1	= 1	0.65%
26th	0 / 0 / 2	= 2	1.30%
27th	0 / 0 / 2	= 2	1.30%
28th	1 / 2 / 1	= 4	2.61%
30th	0 / 1 / 1	= 2	1.30%
31st	0 / 1 / 0	= 1	0.65%
38th	1 / 0 / 0	= 1	0.65%
		153	99.86%

It is astonishing to see from Table 3 that 69 percent (69%) of the teachers placed on probation were dismissed, retired, or resigned. This is certainly an indication that evaluation, which is supposed to result in better teaching, is not working.

TABLE 3

Washington State 1984-1987

Of teachers placed on probation, percentage who have stayed, been dismissed, retired or resigned.
(N= 153 teachers)



A Stayed = 31%
B Dismissed = 20%
C Retired = 18%
D Resigned = 31%

"Since 1978, the Washington State Administrative Code has mandated yearly evaluations of all public school teachers, counselors and principals, and provided evaluative guidelines for each position." (Shreeve et al, 1984) The areas of evaluation and their relevancy will be discussed in greater detail later.

Table 4 shows the areas of deficiencies which resulted in probation and the percentage of teachers unable to correct that deficiency.

Table 4

D. Question # 14: Areas of deficiencies which resulted in probation.

Area	#/153 Teachers	# Unable to Correct
1. Classroom Mgmt.	74/153 (48.36%)	46/74 (62.16%)
2. Instructional Skill	60/153 (39.21%)	40/60 (66.66%)
3. Handling of Student Discipline and other Attendant Matters	57/153 (37.25%)	37/57 (64.91%)
4. Effort Toward Improvement When Needed	44/153 (28.75%)	28/44 (63.63%)
5. Interest in Teaching Students	25/153 (16.33%)	15/25 (60.00%)
6. Professional Prep.	11/153 (7.18%)	6/11 (54.54%)
7. Professional Scholarship	5/153 (3.26%)	5/5 (100%)
Knowledge of Subject Matter		2/5 (40.0%)
9. Other	2/153 (1.30%)	0/2 (0.00%)

Comments:
1. Personal characteristics.
2. Inappropriate treatment of pupils.
3. Unwilling to follow administrative directives.
4. Punctualities.
5. Cooperation and administration.
6. Professional judgment & appropriate behavior in dealing with students and staff.
7. Immature attitude-not willing to teach less able student.
8. Teacher - flagrant abuse of sick leave - called in sick was found at the horse races.
9. Counselor resigned rather than do the work necessary to remove the probation.

Table 5 gives another visual representation of these results.

TABLE 5

Washington State 1984-1987

Areas of deficiencies which resulted in probation and number of teachers unable to correct.

(N= 153 teachers)

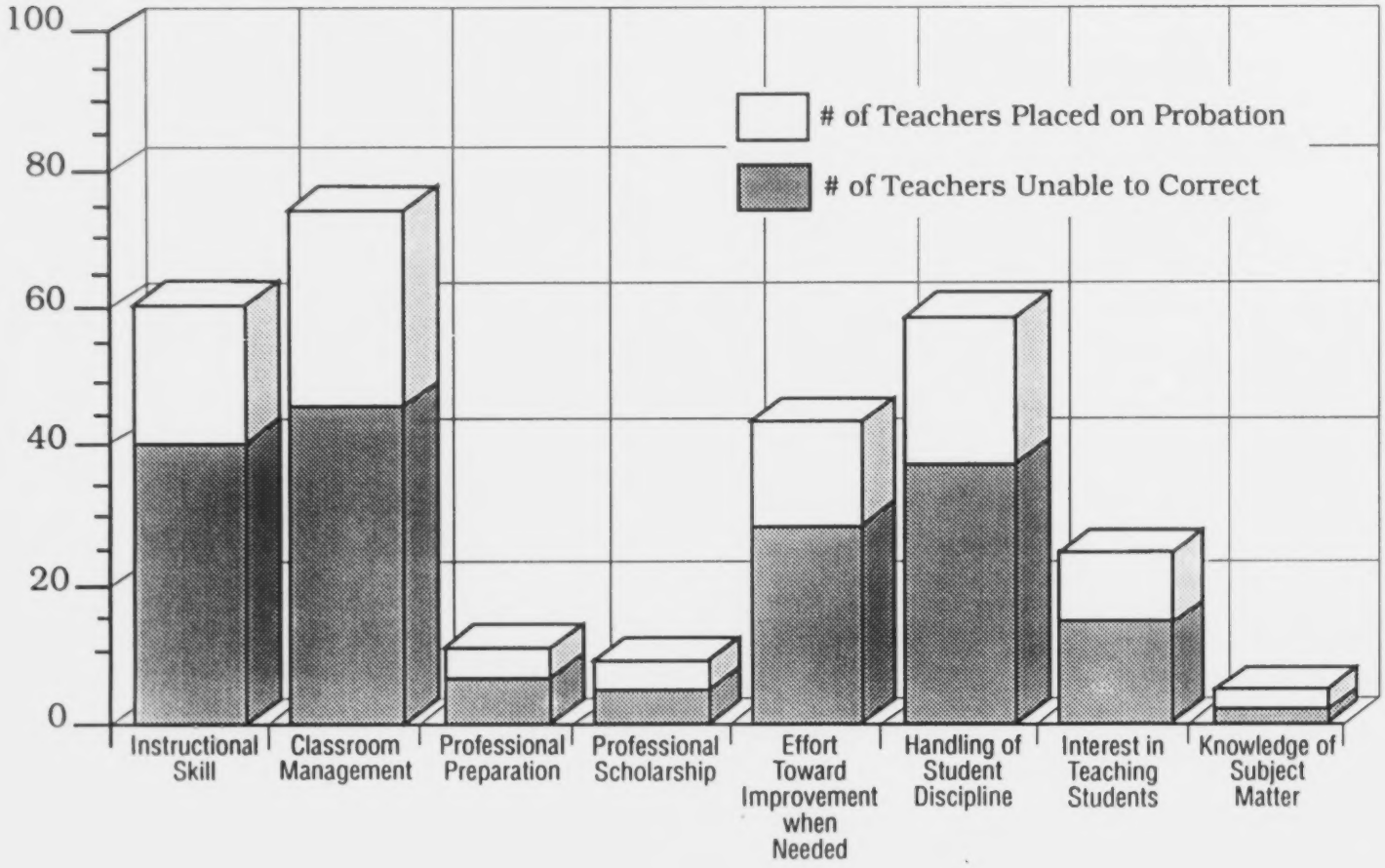


Table 6 shows the results of a study (Lerch, 1986) done in Idaho. In both this study and the study by Lerch, classroom management is one of the top factors leading to teacher probation.

Table 6

160 Teachers Placed on Probation or Not Renewed

Reason	Number	%
1. Behavior, management and motivation problems:	60/160	37.50%
2. Personality & attitude:	29/160	18.12%
3. Poor communication:	21/160	13.12%
Planning problems:	21/160	13.12%
5. Lack of teaching skills:	17/160	10.62%
6. Relations with parents and/or students:	16/160	10.00%
7. Funding problems:	12/160	7.50%
8. Health:	8/160	5.00%
9. Little cooperation:	7/160	4.37%
10. Will place individual on self-improvement plan:	6/160	3.75%
11. Poor preparation:	5/160	3.12%
Knowledge of subject:		
Poor judgment:		
14. Declining enrollment:	3/160	1.87%
Unprofessional:		
Turn average teacher into superior teacher:		

Superintendents were also asked which evaluative criteria are the most difficult for teachers and counselors to remediate. Table 7 shows their responses. The top responses correlate with the areas in Table 4 that resulted in the majority of teachers being put on probation.

Table 7

E. Question #17: **Which of the evaluative criteria are the most difficult for teachers and counselors to remediate? (Ranked 1-8. 1=most difficult, 8= least.**

	Rank Order
1. Handling of student discipline:	2.772
2. Classroom management:	3.014
3. Interest in teaching pupils:	3.059
4. Instructional skills:	3.455
5. Effort toward improvement:	4.207
6. Professional scholarship:	6.208
7. Professional preparation:	6.291
8. Knowledge of subject matter:	6.54

Amazingly, in 65.62 percent of the districts, a teacher could be put on probation for failing to meet only one of the evaluative criteria. Later in this article the evaluative criteria used will be examined and the issue of whether being put on probation for not meeting one of the criteria will be looked at. Table 8 shows the number of areas a certified employee must be judged deficient in before being placed on probation. The comments of the superintendents are also noted. There is a wide range of opinion and practice in this area as noted by the comments.

Table 8

F. Question.

16: In how many areas must a certified employee be judged deficient before being placed on probation?

1 - 63/96 = 65.62%
2 - 13/96 = 13.54%
3 - 12/96 = 12.50%
4 - 4/96 = 4.16%
5 - 3/96 = 3.12%
6 - 0/96 = 0.0%
7 - 1/96 = 1.04%

Comments:

# of Responses:	
12	1. Depends on the degree of deficiency and the impact on total performance.
2	2. If serious enough, there are usually more than one.
10	3. The severity of the problem is related to the number of areas of deficiencies.
7	4. No specific number-the degree of the problem is the most important.
8	5. Areas would be instructional skills, classroom management and student discipline - other categories would not count. If two areas were not corrected, probation would occur. Some areas are weighted more than others. Criteria weighted = classroom mgmt. and effort toward improvement.
12	6. I have no idea-not identified in the district. No set number. No such criteria. No set policy.
3	7. Depends on the area(s) and the seriousness of the deficiency and progress toward remediction.
1	8. Unsatisfactory performance on one criteria is grounds for probation in some cases of you're dealing with minimum criteria.
1	9. Depends on overall performance.
2	10. At least one-most often two. Repetitive pattern-usually occurring in second year. (Prior history is a factor.
1	11. Every effort is made to avoid probation by work with the person, help from fellow teachers, etc.
1	12. Normally, a teacher, counselor, or principal having a problem in one area will have problems in another.
1	13. Usually five or more-however, one area can warrant probation if the problem is employee refusal or deliberate neglect.
1	14. In 25 years of superintendency if a person has an incorrective deficiency in any one of the above mentioned items (principal) or a teacher in two correctable areas they should be dismissed. By incorrectable I mean during the probation period for improvement.
1	15. It depends on the person's attitude toward improvement. If it is poor, even one area would be sufficient.

Superintendents were also asked to take the evaluative criteria used for principals and determine which are the most difficult to remediate. Table 9 shows their responses.

Table 9

G. Question #18: **Of the evaluative criteria listed below for principals, which are the most difficult to remediate? Please rank in order of most difficult to remediate (1) to least difficult to remediate (12).**

1. Leadership:	3.357
2. Knowledge of, experience in, and training in recognizing good professional performance capabilities and development:	4.827
3. Interest in employees:	5.277
4. Ability to evaluate and performance of evaluation of personnel:	5.293
5. Interest in pupils:	5.318
6. Interest in patrons:	6.018
7. Effort toward improvement when needed:	6.623
8. School management:	6.728
9. School administration:	7.008
10. Interest in subjects taught in school:	7.876
11. School finance:	9.107
12. Professional preparation and scholarship:	9.490

Principals or their designees are the people responsible for staff evaluations yet it is interesting to see that the evaluative criteria listed by superintendents as most difficult for principals to remediate are: 1) leadership, 2) knowledge of, experience in, and training in recognizing good professional performance capabilities and development, 3) interest in employees and 4) ability to evaluate and performance of evaluation of personnel. These top four areas are essential in conducting good evaluations. This indicates to the authors of this article that the role of the principal needs to be examined with regard to the conduct of evaluation itself and the ability to then accurately place the employee on probation while having the ability to provide the remedial assistance necessary to help the employee. This issue will be examined later in this article.

WHAT IS EVALUATION?

"Nearly all the current works on evaluation indicate that teachers, administrators, and trustees believe that the prime purpose of evaluation should be the improvement of instruction or the improvement of the teaching/learning process." (Hickcox, 1982) If this definition

were held to be true, then there should be no problem agreeing upon the purpose of evaluation. However, "Perceptions of the purpose of evaluation vary considerably. A Texas study found that 62 percent of the principals said that instructional improvement was the actual purpose. More than 65 percent of Texas teachers saw the renewal or cancellation of contracts as the real purpose." (Grady, 1982) This, unfortunately, is the dilemma most professionals face when looking at evaluation. Hickcox says in his 1982 article - "If this is agreed on (evaluation being the improvement of instruction or the improvement of the teaching/learning process) then the whole process of evaluation should be directed in a particular way. I want to give a warning in this regard, to point out a real dilemma. Instruction and learning occur in the interaction between teacher and student. Anything else becomes irrelevant and cannot be included in the evaluative process. What happens then, if the teacher is not a good school citizen, is in conflict with administrators, does not turn in reports on time, is careless about attending meetings? From the administrative point of view, behaviours in these non-instructional areas are important for the life of the school, even though they are not directly related to teaching. I believe this issue must be discussed, and either the interpretation of what is meant by the improvement of instruction broadened, or else the purpose itself must go beyond the improvement of instruction."

The dilemma of what criteria should be included in evaluation and what evaluation should be will not be resolved in this article. It is hoped that evaluation instruments will be scrutinized to see what items actually are important for good instruction as well as the purpose of evaluation. There must be congruence.

THE EVALUATION INSTRUMENT USED IN THIS STUDY

As stated earlier in this article, the Washington State Administrative Code has specified the areas to be evaluated. "The Code

also established probation, correction and dismissal procedures for those educators who exhibit deficient performance." (Shreeve et al, 1984) However, as indicated earlier in Table 8, how many areas constitute putting a teacher on probation are debatable. Table 10 shows the instrument and the areas that are used in the state of Washington.

Table 10

INSTRUCTIONAL SKILLS

_____ A. Utilizes teaching techniques which are consistent with the selected objectives. Such techniques
(1) make provisions for differences in ability among students;
(2) provide for the previous knowledge, abilities, and interests of the class;
(3) make effective use of instructional equipment, materials, and resource personnel;
(4) provide a variety of activities in keeping with the maturity and attention span of the students;
(5) implement lesson plans but permit flexibility.

_____ B. Gives explanations, assignments, and directions clearly.
_____ C. Makes appropriate assignments.
_____ D. Strives to motivate students by making lessons interesting and challenging.
_____ E. Strives to help students to develop acceptable work habits and study skills.
_____ F. Evaluates lessons and units of study by assessing student achievement of objectives.
_____ G. Establishes immediate and long-range objectives.
_____ H. Prepares plans to meet objectives.
_____ I. Plans for continuing evaluation in lessons and units, and utilizes the results in planning subsequent lessons.
_____ J. Exhibits proper command and use of language skills.

Comments:

PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION AND SCHOLARSHIP

_____ A. Possesses academic background appropriate to the subject area or grade level and is current in that subject area or grade level.

Comments:

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

_____ A. Selects and prepares equipment and materials in advance of lesson.
_____ B. Maintains orderly, attractive, and stimulating classroom environment and atmosphere, within the limits of the facilities and materials available.
_____ C. Provides plans for a substitute teacher.
_____ D. Considers abilities, interests, and present performance levels of students in planning.
_____ E. Is consistently prompt and accurate with reports.
_____ F. Communicates effectively with parents.
_____ G. Exhibits self-control, mature behavior, and judgment.
_____ H. Maintains an appearance that does not detract from the educational process.

Comments:

KNOWLEDGE OF SUBJECT MATTER

_____ A. Demonstrates competence in subject matter or grade level.

Comments:

Table 10, cont.

HANDLING OF STUDENT DISCIPLINE AND ATTENDANT PROBLEMS

_____ A. Establishes and maintains order and discipline in the classroom including:
(1) quiet when appropriate;
(2) attention to the teacher when instruction is being given;
(3) students conforming to established rules.
_____ B. Shows consistence and fairness in dealing with student behavior.
_____ C. Disciplines students in a firm but controlled manner.
_____ D. Encourages students to develop courtesy, self-control, respect, and responsibility.
_____ E. Enlists the assistance of counselors, vice principal, principal, and other supportive personnel when appropriate.
_____ F. Assists in maintaining control and enforcing rules throughout the school.

Comments:

EFFORT TOWARD IMPROVEMENT WHEN NEEDED

_____ A. Is responsive to supervision and constructive criticism.
_____ B. Endeavors to implement improvement suggestions.
_____ C. Has plan for evaluation of own work and initiates efforts to improve.

Comments:

PROFESSIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

_____ A. Exhibits flexibility.
_____ B. Is willing to make decisions and accept responsibility.
_____ C. Demonstrates understanding of established priorities.
_____ D. Indicates a willingness to accept school responsibilities.

Comments:

INTEREST IN TEACHING PUPILS

Strives to develop rapport with the student as an individual.
Deals with personal information and communication in an ethical manner.
Evaluates individual student progress regularly and maintains records for report card and/or parent conferences.
_____ Provides guidance and assistance for students.

"The crux of the problem in regard to using a rating form for evaluating teachers in the criteria employed by the ratings. They are characteristically so ill-defined and variable across raters that the results of evaluation are typically inconsistent and confusing (Popham, 1974)." (Clark, 1982)

"Criteria placed on rating forms or embodied in procedures should be as specific and measurable as possible. It is not enough to simply list classroom climate as a criterion. Does it refer to room temperature? Can it vary from class to class? Does it involve noise level? Humour? Movement? Voice? And how does it relate to learning? And is it better to have an open or a closed climate?" (Hickcox, 1982)

Looking at the form and criteria used in the state of Washington, these same concerns can be raised. How do the criteria relate to teaching/learning? Are the criteria specific and measurable? These are fair questions to ask as the interpretation of these criteria have resulted in teachers being put on probation and not continuing in their chosen profession that they have invested blood, sweat, tears, time and money in.

In the area of Effort Toward Improvement When Needed, how does a supervisor measure the responsiveness of a teacher to supervision and constructive criticism? Is this related to teaching/learning? In the area of Professional Characteristics, how do you measure exhibits flexibility? If a teacher turns down a teaching assignment he/she feels unprepared for, can this area be marked as unsatisfactory? Does a willingness to accept school responsibilities relate to teaching/learning in the classroom?

In Classroom Management, maintains an appearance that does not detract from the educational process is listed. "Dress codes may be important, but they should be made a part of administrative regulations of some kind rather than of the evaluation of teaching." (Hickcox, 1982)

These are questions on only some of the items. It is urgent that evaluation really be designed for the purpose it was intended. The instrument used for evaluation must measure what it is intended to measure - "the improvement of instruction of the improvement of the teaching/learning process." (Hickcox, 1982) Anything less is unfairly setting up the teacher for failure. An evaluative instrument, such as the one used by the districts in this study, that leaves the criteria open to subjective judgment is not a learning tool. ". . . If I were

a teacher I would want to know in advance at least what the evaluator thinks these terms mean." (Hickcox, 1982) "In other words, there should be 'no surprises' for teachers involved in any evaluation scheme." (Clark, 1982)

HOW CAN A TENURED TEACHER BE DISMISSED FOR INCOMPETENCE?

As stated previously, a deficiency in only one of the evaluative criteria can lead to probation and then to dismissal.

"When tenured teachers are dismissed for incompetence, one or more of the following types of failure are usually involved (Bridges, 1974):

1. Technical failure: Technical failure is indicated by deficiencies in one or more of the following: discipline, teaching methods, knowledge of subject matter, explanation of concepts, evaluation of pupil performance, organization, planning, lesson plans, and homework assignments.
2. Bureaucratic failure: Bureaucratic failure is indicated by the teacher's failure to follow suggestions for improving his or her performance, to adhere to the content of the district's curriculum, or to allow supervisors in the classroom for the purpose of observing the teacher's performance.
3. Ethical failure: Violations of these standards commonly take the form of physical or psychological abuse of students, negative attitudes toward students, and indifferent performance of one's teaching duties.
4. Productive failure: Productive failure is indicated by the academic progress of students, the interest in students of what is being taught, the attitude of students toward school, the respect of students for the teacher, and the climate of the classroom.
5. Personal failure: Indicators of personal deficiencies include poor judgment, emotional instability, lack of self-control, and insufficient strength to withstand the rigors of teaching." (Bridges & Groves, 1984)

" . . . the most prevalent type of failure is technical; more than 80 percent of the tenured dismissal cases involved this kind of failure (Bridges, 1974) The leading indicator of technical failure is deficiency in maintaining discipline. Interestingly, weakness in discipline emerges as a leading cause for dismissal in every study of teacher failure conducted since 1913 (Little, 1914; Buellesfield, 1915; Madesen, 1927; Simon, 1936; Bridges, 1974)." (Bridges & Groves, 1984)

In this study superintendents were asked to rank from the most important (1) to the least important (9) areas in which they thought students preparing for the teaching profession need more emphasis. Table 11 gives these results.

Table 11

H. Question #21: **Please rank the following points from the most important (1) to the least important (9) for areas in which you think students preparing for the teaching profession need more emphasis.**

1. Identification of learning needs:	2.248
2. More practicum experience:	2.564
Student discipline:	
4. Teaching methodology:	3.754
5. Preparation in major/minor:	5.467
6. Professionalism:	5.825
7. Measurement and evaluation:	6.213
8. Curriculum development:	6.392
9. Mainstreaming:	7.060

Measurement and evaluation, Curriculum development and Mainstreaming were at the bottom of their list. A point to ponder upon is that unless a teacher knows how to adjust to everyone's needs (and Mainstreaming is a big part of that now), how to develop curriculum that is appropriate to all levels and how to evaluate all students at their ability level, classroom discipline problems are a guaranteed result. Perhaps the ability to have good classroom discipline stems from knowledge and control of the other areas of teaching rather than being just an isolated area.

WHY MIGHT FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS HAVE TROUBLE?

This study shows that 16 percent (16%) of first-year teachers are put on probation. That number seems extraordinarily high, especially since they have just come out of a tough training period. Questions need to be raised regarding the issue of first-year teachers.

Does the current system expect first-year teachers to be already proficient in all areas of teaching? How does the system foster the growth of these young teachers and nurture them as they grow from student to teacher? Does the evaluation instrument in use allow for any grwoth and nurturing? "With the increasing shortage of teachers throughout this decade and into the next, the issue of attrition becomes even more critical. There was consensus that the rocky transition period for so many beginning teachers is an important factor in the high attrition rate in the profession." (Hitz & Roper, 1986)

"Twenty-six percent (26%) of new teachers leave after the first two years and 60 percent leave after five years." (Henry, 1986) "Of all first-year teachers who enter the profession, 40 to 50 percent will leave during the first seven years of their careers, and more than two-thirds of those will resign in the first four years of teaching. A 1984 Wisconsin study reveals that the most academically able are among the first to leave education, and that they are doing so in increasing numbers. Approximately 50 percent of those who take jobs as teachers leave the profession within five years!" (Stone, 1987)

The preceding statistics coupled with the results of this survey indicate that this alarming trend is continuing. Why?

Let us take Teacher X. (Teacher X is real but wishes to remain anonymous). He/she is hired a week before school begins. (This seems to be common practice in larger districts). He/she has no time to prepare for classes. Since experienced teachers take the brighter students, Teacher X is left with the students who are either disruptive, academically less able, or both. "Adams (1982) also noted that a contributing factor to first year reality shock may be that many new teachers are assigned to difficult and less desirable classes." (Marso & Pigge, 1987) Teacher X has no permanent classroom so he/she has to

travel from room to room. In order to get the job, Teacher X has had to commit to coach. We all know Teacher X, we've been there and somehow survived. The question remains: How long can educators let this type of situation occur where new teachers flounder? How responsible is this to our profession?

"She called me at the university from time to time to ask for help and advice. Unfortunately, the problems she faced were not the ones I could solve. She had begun working on the first day of school with no time to prepare for her class, a combination of fifth and sixth graders that included some of the worst behavior problems in school. She knew that the last person to turn to was her principal, because that would be a sign of weakness." (Stone, 1987)

"Joan's experience. 'It's very, very lonely, I felt all by myself. I had the worst kids and the most kids - 32 inner-city first graders. And I was left completely alone. No one every walked into my room. I never saw the principal. Finally, a second-grade teacher took pity on me and saved my life. We taught music together with both classes in one room. She led the singing and I played the piano. I learned how to control students by watching her. I wouldn't have made it without her." (Stone, 1987)

Is it any wonder first year teachers leave? If evaluation is punitive and not growth-oriented, what first year teacher wouldn't be on probation? The question remains - is this the first year teacher's flaw or does the system and evaluative instrument and process need to change?

WHY MIGHT EXPERIENCED TEACHERS HAVE TROUBLE?

The results of this survey showed that 16 percent (16%) of teachers who had taught from eleven to fifteen years were on probation. Thirteen percent (13%) were put on probation after teaching 21-25 years. Are these just poor teachers? What is causing this?

". . . teachers have been switched to grade levels or subjects which they have never taught and, perhaps are only marginally qualified (due to seniority governing lay-offs). In light of these responses to

admittedly difficult problems one is hardly surprised to hear Dr. Billy Reagan, general superintendent of the Houston Independent School District say, 'We will find certainly as much as 25 percent of the teachers in the classrooms of America today that do not possess the skills to teach above the 7th and 8th grade level in terms of content.'" (Bridges & Groves, 1984

Educators must struggle to do what is right. If a teacher is switched to another content area or grade level, what help should the district provide? Should that teacher be evaluated with the same instrument? Is this an easy way to get rid of someone?

WHAT ROLE TO PRINCIPALS PLAY?

Earlier in this article (Table 9) it was stated that principals have difficulty in areas related to evaluation. Perhaps districts need to retrain these educational leaders who are in the forefront of evaluation.

"What principals can do:

1. Be clear about your expectations and philosophy.
2. Provide an orientation for both the district and the school.
3. Provide emotional support and foster self-esteem.
4. Provide a supportive work place. "Make available sufficient textbooks, materials, supplies and resources. Place the teacher at a grade level that is familiar and comfortable. Avoid placing discipline problems or students with excessive individual needs in a new teacher's class.'
5. Time is the most valuable resource you can provide - 'Don't make excessive demands on the new teacher's time in the form of outside responsibilities or special jobs.'
6. Provide a 'Buddy' or mentor teacher at a similar grade level and preferably one whose classroom is close to the novice teacher's." (Stone, 1987)

Principals need to become educational leaders, not building managers. School districts need to let them stay in their buildings instead of constantly going to meetings outside their buildings.

In the area of evaluation, "Ratings by superintendents, supervisors and principals should not be accepted as the sole or valid criteria until persons in these positions have been re-educated for this responsibility (McCall & Krause, 1959)." (Bridges & Groves, 1984)

TWO NEW APPROACHES FOR EVALUATION AND HELP

1. The Washington State Teacher Assistance Program:

The state of Washington has developed a **Teacher Assistance Program.** This program paired up "beginning" and "experienced" teachers with mentor teachers. "An 'experienced' teacher can be 1) a teacher assigned to a different subject area or grade level from previous assignments; 2) a teacher re-entering the teaching program; 3) a teacher who has taught as a substitute teacher 90 consecutive days or more, but has never taught on a regular contract; 4) a teacher who has been newly hired by the district." (Billings, 1989) Mentors and teachers are paid, workshops are attended by both teachers and substitues are paid for. This program addresses the need for help but not the evaluation process.

2. The Florida Beginning Teacher Portfolio Process:

This is an exciting new way to look at teacher growth vs. the traditional concept of evaluation. "The heart of the Florida Beginning Teacher Program is the building-level support team. This team is made up of three members, a peer teacher, a building-level administrator, and at least one other professional." (Shea, 1982)

"A key feature in the Florida Beginning Teacher Program is the reliance upon a written plan developed by the beginning teacher and the support team to serve as a guide for the teacher's continued professional development in demonstrating mastery of the minimum essential competencies. To assist the beginning teacher in acquiring these competencies, the support team may suggest activities such as inservice components, content area study, observation in other classrooms, visitations, conferences and other similar assignments." (Shea, 1982)

This process "requires the individual teacher to take a principal role in the decision-making and establishes the classroom as the ongoing laboratory for teacher training. The portfolio as a process includes three stages within a given cycle:
1) the collection of data to support teaching competence,
2) the review and analysis of the data by a support team, and
3) the commitment to a plan of action by the teacher.
This commitment to action requires, most of all, that the teacher set in motion the kinds of agreed upon activities that are mutually perceived as growth-producing opportunities." (Terry, Backman & Eade, 1983)

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Teacher evaluation needs to be a continuous, on-going process of individual growth toward practices that foster the improvement of instruction or the improvement of the teaching/learning process.

This type of a process cannot take place using the evaluative instruments and systems in place today. A check-list approach does not involve the teacher in the dynamic process of self-evaluation and change. Teachers are at different stages in their professional growth.

First year teachers need to be nurtured and brought into a system that takes them from student to teacher. The classroom needs to be their laboratory. Their colleagues and principal need to be their collaborative partners in the process. They need to be treated like professionals, setting their own goals and receiving help in achieving those goals. Teaching is an on-going growth process, not an end that can be looked at each year.

Continuing teachers need the challenge of setting new goals that meet the teaching situations they find themselves in. Again, their colleagues and principal should be their collaborators as they set their goals.

"The challenge is to superimpose a system involving observation, analysis, remediation and reinforcement in a collegial process free from the draconian threat of termination." (Grady, 1982)

If a collegial, collaborative, self-directed process is used to help teachers foster their individual growth toward desired teaching and teaching/learning outcomes, then a survey such as this one, dealing with probation should never have to take place again.

It is the belief of this research team that teachers are capable of charting their own growth and improvement given a system that treats them as professionals.

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